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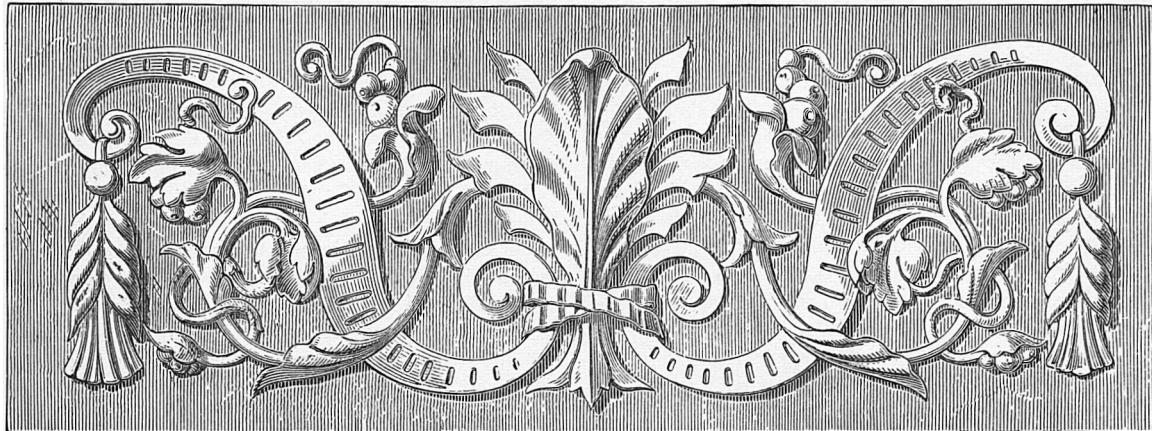
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BIBLIOGRAPHY.

CRITICISM.

THE SCIENCE OF TASTE. *Being a Treatise on its Principles.* By GLADSTON-LINGHAM. With 105 Illustrations by the Author. London: Edward Stanford. 1879. 250 pp. 8vo.

WHILE in effect writing a general treatise on Taste, the author of this book endeavors to maintain that it is amenable to laws, and therefore may be considered as a science. These laws are founded on æsthetic appreciation, the knowledge of that which is best calculated to please, rather than such as may happen to do so, and the approval of reason rather than sense; and therefore Taste is a subject within the reach of rational discussion. He says: "It will not be long before principles are established in this as in every other science; and if we deduce our laws from those ascertainable laws written upon the open volume of Nature before us, we shall have no difficulty in ascertaining what is best calculated to please the eye, gratify the mind, elevate the sentiments, and conduce to that general harmony which prevails in creation around us; which the spirit of man so earnestly desires, but which the folly of man so materially impedes."

We have thus endeavored to state as concisely as possible his aim and intention in offering to the public this profusely illustrated and handsomely printed volume. That the book is not what it aims to be, does not surprise us. As said at the outset, it is simply a treatise on Taste. It is pervaded by a spirit of manly earnestness and candor, not unmixed with a determination to strike at the root of the many popular fallacies in matters of taste. Its tendency is to decry the prevailing influence of sentiment, as in contradistinction to that of reason and sense. While endeavoring to lay down the fundamental principles of criticism, it severely criticizes those who do not recognize them, with an air which savors almost of cynicism. It is a free lance thrown at the sentimental bosh of the day, both in art culture and the books that treat of it. The practical knowledge of the great number of subjects referred to for illustration, in the various chapters, gives force to these attacks.

The author's contempt for all conventionalities in art and criticism, and his free treatment of the subject, are such as we should expect from an American rather than an English pen.

The title is an unfortunate one. There is nothing in the treatment of the subject which goes to show that there is any science in taste, yet there is a great deal of good sense in this volume, and the result is a different book from what the reader would at first suppose it to be. It may do much good in leading others up to independent thought in matters of art, as well as in the many other matters of taste touched upon for illustration. For the author maintains that taste is all pervading and universal. He commences with architecture, and passes through every department of decoration, and includes painting and sculpture, the use of color, literature, and personal adornment.

His definition of Taste, given in the first sentence of the Introduction, may be accepted without any dispute as to whether taste is a science or not, and is on the whole satisfactory. He says, "Taste may be concisely defined as the capability of appreciating the Beautiful; and the Beautiful is primarily that which, by attracting the eye, satisfies and elevates the mind." Hence taste is the result of education, and no man is competent to exercise it, or can be said to have taste with reference to any subject or thing, unless he is well informed about that particular thing. It follows, therefore, that a man is not presumably a man of taste because he is generally well educated. He can only be a man of taste in the specialties which he has studied, or to which he has given particular attention. Taste is also amenable to reason. In this view of the subject the author does not stand alone, so far as the application of taste to architecture and the kindred arts is concerned. No one has contended more strongly than Viollet-le-Duc that the best Greek art was consistent with rationalism above every other quality. And while he has endeavored through all his writings to impress upon the French people the importance of making all modern architecture amenable to the dictates of reason, our author maintains that it is the foundation of all good taste in matters of architecture, painting, sculpture, decoration, color, language; and per-

sonal adornment. It is under these heads, or very nearly so, that he considers the subject in detail, and adduces a number of illustrations serving to show what forms the basis of good taste in these departments of human progress.

He makes a savage onslaught upon the prevailing influence of fashion in matters of taste. He demands that his country shall establish and maintain a national method of construction adapted to materials used, climate, and other circumstances, as an essential preliminary to a true progress in architectural design. The absurdities and incongruities of many accepted and popularly admired works of architecture are criticised in a ruthless manner, yet we hardly think his proposed reforms—such, for instance, as the “suggestion for Park Gates,” with an illustration—would meet with the commendation of those who are competent to judge, or, according to his standard, men of taste. His discussion of the *rationale* of window proportion is far from sound, and in this, as often in many other illustrations adduced, he reasons from one side of the question. Proportion in architecture, another knotty subject, about which the world has been treated with many foolish speculations, also receives a share of comment, without any decided conclusion. But notwithstanding this, there is much said about architectural detail which is well calculated to set men to thinking about common errors which they never thought worth thinking about.

Among the illustrations are several showing what absurdities are to be found in the details of the work of some of England's most prominent architects. These, as reproduced by the author, look all the worse by being isolated from their surroundings.

One suggestion about color in decoration is especially valuable. He says (page 102): “In nature we find that, with the exception of green and blue, what may be termed positive and decided colors are never introduced in masses, but are reserved for flowers, for the plumage of birds, for insects, precious stones, and such like. Following the disposition thus indicated, we ought to confine ourselves to such hues as are unobtrusive, and embellish with those which are richer.” He claims that no color is so appropriate as green in a background for pictures, it being suggested by Nature herself.

The article on Common Sense is the best in the book. In it the Misses Garrett, Mrs. Orrinsmith, Mrs. Haweis, M. Blanc, and Dr. Dresser receive his most vigorous pen slashes for their shallow sentimentalisms. And yet, notwithstanding that a large portion of it is devoted to illustrations of manifest errors in the use of the English language by some of the most prominent writers of the present day, not even sparing Thackeray, Dickens, Eastlake, and the *Fortnightly Review*, the author uses such astounding words as “consecution” (page 66), “effectuation” (page 111), and “accomplishable” (page 112), and he quite equals Eugène Véron in this remarkable interrogation: “Wherein lies the super-excellence of a properly-cut coat, but in a concatenation of differences in themselves inconsiderable?”

The articles on male and female attire are original and fresh, and are interesting contributions to the literature of that important subject—to womankind at least. The illustrations are profuse and to the point. Certainly the aesthetics of dress have never been so thoroughly analyzed before.

In the concluding chapter he pleads for the general cultivation and dissemination of taste, by which he means a

cultivation of the knowledge of what is good and bad in design, throughout his country. He compares it with France, where the prevailing good taste of the people is the result of gratuitous education and judicious subventions.

But what is good for the English people in this respect is doubly essential to the æsthetic progress and well-being of our own, and Americans who sympathize with the English in all efforts for self-culture in art, literature, and all that is elevating and ennobling, will find much in this book to set them thinking about reason and common-sense, even if it does not induce them to appreciate the study of the science of taste.

P. B. WIGHT.

ANCIENT ART.

THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ART. Translated from the German of JOHN WINCKELMANN, by G. HENRY LODGE, M. D. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co. 1880. Four volumes in two. xvi + 491 pp. and xx + 507 pp. 8vo. Illustr.

 R. LODGE'S translation of Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art*, first published some thirty years ago, still keeps its place as a standard version of the learned æsthetician's text. In this new edition it will doubtless meet with the continued favor which it merits as a faithful rendering into idiomatic English of a work which, despite the flood of light that has been poured upon the subject of which it treats in these later days, no student of art can consult without profit. We could wish that the translator had enriched the original text with notes and commentaries calculated to bring it up to the modern stand-point, and thus made it as valuable from an historical, as it must always be from an æsthetic point of view; but we have no right to quarrel with him on this score, as he has so well accomplished the far easier task which he undertook. In comparing the translation with the Stuttgart edition of Winckelmann's Works published in 1847, we have, however, found a few arbitrary changes which seem to us not altogether judicious. Thus, for example, at least two thirds of the notes are omitted, and those given, instead of being placed at the bottom of the pages to which they refer, are collected at the end of each volume. Furthermore, the text is so divided in the translation that it is not always easy to follow the references. Thus, at page 285 of Mr. Lodge's first volume, where Winckelmann's fourth book begins, we find Vol. II. and a Preface; but when we look at the Explanation of Plates, at page 504 of the second bound volume, in which these plates are given, we find that the pagination refers to it only, and after some search discover that the eighteen inserted in the first are incompletely referred to in the Preface on page 283. Again, on p. 22, Vol. I., Winckelmann says: “The list of works which I have prefixed does not include all that I have cited.” Mr. Lodge's note at the foot of the page reads: “The catalogue of books is given in the last volume.” We are bound to say that, after faithful search in the German edition and the American translation, we have failed to discover the bibliography promised by the author and his translator, and probably never compiled.

At page 41 of the first volume, Dr. Lodge claims that the biography of Winckelmann with which it opens is the